

CHAPTER 3 SECTION 8.3

TRANSJUGULAR INTRAHEPATIC PORTOSYSTEMIC SHUNT (TIPS)

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I. DESCRIPTION

Transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPS) is an invasive radiological procedure performed percutaneously through the jugular vein and involves the creation of an intrahepatic shunt between the hepatic vein and portal vein.

II. POLICY

A. TIPS is covered for the following indications:

1. Therapy of acute or recurrent esophageal variceal bleeding which is not controlled by or is unresponsive to standard treatment such as endoscopic therapy, pharmacological therapy or surgical shunt.

2. Patients with irreversible hepatic disease who are candidates for liver transplantation and require control of esophageal variceal bleeding.

III. EXCLUSIONS

A. TIPS is considered unproven for the following indications and is not covered:

1. As initial therapy for acute or recurrent esophageal variceal bleeding.
2. For the treatment of refractory ascites, Budd-Chiari syndrome, hepatorenal syndrome, or gastric variceal bleeding.
3. Preoperative portal decompression to facilitate liver transplantation.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE September 29, 1995

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